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## Husserl's Transcendental Idealism Revisited

Rudolf BERNET

It is widely known that the *Ideas I*<sup>1</sup>, appearing in 1913, was the first publication in which Husserl explicitly argued in favor of a phenomenological idealism. It is also well known that this standpoint immediately incited dispute as well as astonishment, with the controversy surrounding it still remaining animated today. The surprise of the students and first readers, as well as the fact that the *Ideas I* never uses the term "idealism" by name to characterize the nature of transcendental phenomenology, managed to make it seem as if it came about as a result of a sudden or at least hastily-made about-turn on Husserl's part, and not through a decision which had been ripely reflected upon. Thanks to a volume soon to appear in the *Husserliana*, compiling the principal texts by Husserl on transcendental idealism,<sup>2</sup> we can take account of how the Husserlian position concerning phenomenological idealism had, for the most part, already been established by 1908. Likewise, the famous "*Nachwort*" to the *Ideas I* written in 1930,<sup>3</sup> clearly shows that Husserl maintained his idealism up until the end of his days - all the while insisting that the *Ideas I* had gone amiss in suggesting that such a form of idealism went together with a solipsistic conception of transcendental subjectivity.

The phenomenological idealism of the *Ideas I*, such as it is set out in its *phänomenologische Fundamentalbetrachtung*, is the outcome of a phenomenological investigation concerning the conditions of possibility of an authentic knowledge of objective reality. Because the establishment of these conditions of possibility is, for Husserl, a matter of an examination of the manner in which objective reality is intuitively given to consciousness, rather than any sort of inquiry into the logical

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<sup>1</sup> E. Husserl. *Collected Works Vol II: Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*. Fred Kersten, trans. Dordrecht, Kluwer, 1982.

<sup>2</sup> E. Husserl, *Transzendentaler Idealismus. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1908-1921)*, herausgegeben von Robin Rollinger.

<sup>3</sup> E. Husserl, "Epilogue," in: *Collected Works Vol. III: Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. Second Book: Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer, trans. Dordrecht, Kluwer, 1989. pp. 405-430.

nature of reason, the analysis of "external" perception comes to play a preponderant role therein. Already this perception (and not only the judgement based on it), involves a "positing" of the reality of things and of the world. Moreover, it falls to this form of perception - inasmuch as it is the experience of a givenness of the thing itself, "in flesh and bone" (*leibhaft*) - to justify belief in the existence of the world. However, such a legitimization of objective reality by perceptual consciousness can only avoid the contradictions of psychologism on the express condition that this consciousness, serving as the epistemological foundation for the existence of objective reality, does not itself belong to that reality. This is why the task of a "phenomenological reduction" is to purify the perceptual consciousness of any apperception as an empirical reality, before being able to confer on it the task of validating or "constituting" the existence of a transcendent empirical reality.

For a phenomenology which, as a "critique of knowledge," can only hold the positing of the existence of an objective reality to be legitimate to the extent that, at the same time, this existence is attested to in "pure" consciousness under the form of an intuitive phenomenon, the meaning of the existence of the world necessarily depends on transcendental consciousness. For the most part, phenomenological idealism is nothing other than the solemn proclamation of such a dependence of the truth-value of the positing of the existence of the world vis-a-vis intentional, perceptual, and pure consciousness of that world. This form of idealism does not, therefore, have to make any claims as to what the reality of the world could be independent of the positing of a transcendental subject's knowledge of it. That is to say, outside the subject's pretension to having knowledge of a real object<sup>4</sup> and the justification of this subjective pretension by an actual act of perception had by a pure consciousness, this sort of idealism need not make any claims about the reality of the world.

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<sup>4</sup> According to our terminological convention, by "real" or "actually real," we mean an actually existing object (*wirklich*), in distinction to a merely possible object or a fictive object. It is worth mentioning that this sense of "real," meaning that which actually exists, is not synonymous with what Husserl himself calls "*real*." First of all, "*real*" in the Husserlian sense means anything concerning an empirical or sensuous *thing* (*res*), and is thus to be distinguished from anything relating to an *ideal* object. A fictive sensuous object is hence a "*real*" object for Husserl, even though it has no actual or "real" existence. "*Real*" then refers to a *possibility* of experience of an object insofar as it would be founded on an already actually (*wirklich*) accomplished experience. Such a "real" possibility (*reale Möglichkeit*) of experience of an object is to be distinguished from an "ideal" possibility (*ideale Möglichkeit*), which is the product of pure phantasy rather than of any actual experience. This difference between real possibility and ideal possibility is just as applicable to the experience of empirical objects as to that of ideal objects. However, we shall see that there is a fundamental difference between ideal objects and

If the *Ideas I* does not content itself with merely stating this thesis - it being one which is fairly banal once one accepts its premises - this is above all because no external perception, nor any finite series of harmonious external perceptions can definitively assure us of the actual reality of a transcendent thing. For lack of an adequate givenness of the thing, the assertion of the dependence of the thing's actual reality vis-a-vis a pure perceptual consciousness is thus accompanied by a compunctory reservation which draws our attention to the fact that the attestation to the thing's actual reality by such a consciousness is only ever provisional. Likewise, though nothing in the preceding course of our experience allows us to foresee it, in principal it is never out of the question that a subsequent perception may come to contradict the previous perceptions of the thing, to the point of annulling our faith in the thing's existence. Must one then conclude, just as is done in the *Ideas I* without a second thought, that the only thing about which the phenomenologist can be apodictically certain is the existence of pure consciousness such as it is given, i.e. adequately, in an "internal" perception? From such a line of reasoning, is one justified in drawing the patently metaphysical conclusion that consciousness - in contrast to the actual reality of the world of transcendent things - is an enduring or substantial being which "*nulla 're' indiget ad existendum*"?<sup>5</sup> Is that not to confuse the (presumptive) form of a particular *thing's* existence with that of the *world*? Is that not to take away from consciousness its transcendental character, which is to say its power to constitute transcendent reality? Is that not to close up the field of phenomenological investigation by confining it to a consciousness such as can only be given to me, where I am the sole person who may have an internal perception of it?

In what follows, I wish to show how a text almost contemporaneous with the *Ideas I* develops a version of phenomenological idealism which is not only more precise, but which is also less problematic. It has the great advantage of no longer relying on the Cartesian opposition between the sphere of immanence of my own consciousness, of which I can be apodictically certain, and transcendent reality, the actual existence of which forever remains problematic. In this text,

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empirical objects regarding their actual existence ("*Wirklichkeit*"); while a really or only ideally possible ideal object cannot but have an 'actual existence' (or validity) in the world of essences, the experience of the ideal or even real possibility of an empirical object never suffices to assure us of its actual reality in the empirical world. In accordance with the usage, we shall reserve the terms "reality" or "actual reality" ("*Wirklichkeit*") for denoting actually existing empirical objects and their world.

<sup>5</sup> E. Husserl, *Ideas I* (*op. cit.*), § 49.

which came about in the context of Husserl's revision of the *Sixth Logical Investigation*,<sup>6</sup> he is inspired (at least implicitly) more by Leibniz than Descartes. In it, he analyzes the actual givenness of the reality of the transcendent world as being the outcome of a "realization" of a possibility which precedes and predetermines the experience of the actual existence of that reality. Since it goes without saying that the (ideal or real) *possibility* of an object necessarily depends on the power of consciousness to have a representation of it, the dependence of the possible object with respect to consciousness of its possibility need not be demonstrated at length.

This is why the phenomenological theory of knowledge will be able to devote all its efforts to the examination of the difference between an empty assumption and a justified assumption about the possibility of an object. It follows that Husserl's interest shifts from the analysis of the relationship between immanence and transcendence to the analysis of the justification of a positing of an object as possible or actually real by means of an intuitive fulfillment of that act of positing. In successively investigating the phenomenological consciousness in which ideally possible, really possible, and actually real objects are given, Husserl is never brought to cast doubts upon the intentional correlation between the act and its object. Furthermore, he will no longer have any reason for confusing the dependence of the modes of being of the object vis-a-vis intuitive consciousness with an independence of this consciousness vis-a-vis its intentional objects. This new meditation on the meaning of phenomenological idealism reaches its apogee in the examination of that which separates and at the same time links together, on the one hand, an intuitive consciousness which phenomenologically assures us of the solely *possible* existence of an empirical object, and on the other, that which assures us of its *actual* reality. Making headway thus, Husserl is not only brought to distinguish between a broad versus a strict sense of phenomenological idealism, but will also show that the transcendental consciousness which assures us of the actual reality of the world must be a consciousness which is at once both embodied and intersubjective.

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<sup>6</sup> E. Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen. Ergänzungsband. Erster Teil. Entwürfe zur Umarbeitung der VI. Untersuchung und zur Vorrede für die Neuauflage der Logischen Untersuchungen* (Sommer 1913), Husserliana XX/1, herausgegeben von Ullrich Melle, Dordrecht/Boston/London, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002. (All further references to this work shall be shown in parentheses in the text, by referring to either a page or a section number.)

### 1. Possible and Impossible Objects

The new conception of phenomenological idealism, such as it is sketched out by Husserl in the framework of his revision of the *Sixth Logical Investigation*, is essentially the product of a new phenomenological analysis of the intentional consciousness of a *possibility*. The completely new chapter which the texts of July and August 1913 devote to possibility and impossibility (171-230) replaces the former fourth chapter of the Sixth Investigation, which was entitled "*Verträglichkeit und Unverträglichkeit*." As the change in the title already suggests, Husserl moves from an *ontological* analysis to a *phenomenological* analysis of possibility and impossibility. The previous ontological understanding of possibility as compatibility studied the manner in which parts are able to be integrated into a whole. "*Verträglichkeit*" was thus a matter of "*Vereinbarkeit*," and this possibility or impossibility of reuniting parts into a whole was governed by the laws of formal ontology, and secondarily, by those of material ontologies. To the extent that the *Logical Investigations* considers all objects as objects of possible significations, this theory about the compatibility of parts and wholes also pertains to formal apophantics, and more particularly, to pure grammar.

It quickly turns out, however, that in leaving behind the ontological treatment of possibility in favor of a phenomenological treatment of it, one does not speak of two different things, but of the same thing in different manners. More precisely, the *phenomenological* analysis of the modes of intuitive intentional consciousness, in which an object or a signification is originally given as being possible or impossible, allows one to clarify the meaning and to justify the validity of an *ontological* or semantical compatibility or incompatibility. Were it not that it would take us too far off course, it would be fascinating to show how this phenomenological analysis of possibility instates, almost incidentally, an epistemological foundation of predicative logic. In the revision of the *Sixth Logical Investigation*, this phenomenological foundation of logic is already carried out in the form of a genealogy, like the one one finds in the much later analyses in *Experience and Judgement*. The various modes of consciousness of a possibility or an impossibility are those *experiences* which lead us to make a judgment in a positive or negative form, under the form of an assertion or a question, a hypothesis or a relation of logical consequence. All of these issues are at stake in our text on possibility, and Husserl cannot resist the temptation to add a long "*Exkurs über Ansätze, Grund- und Folgesetzungen*" (§ 65).

Subsequently, we shall study, above all, the manner in which this new

phenomenological treatment of possibility prepares the way for the phenomenological foundation of actual *reality* and the phenomenological idealism contained in it. We will see that the intuitive consciousness in which the *being-real* of an object finds its verification (*Rechtsquelle* - 193) is to be understood as a "realization" of an intuitive consciousness of a *possibility*. Throughout, it is a question of a "*correlation*" between intuitive consciousness and its intentional object, and this is meant to account for the possible or real mode of being (*Seinsmodus*) of the object.<sup>7</sup> Hence, Husserl examines, in turn, the intuitive consciousness in which something's being-ideally-possible, being-really-possible, and being-real are given. We will see that these modalities of being in principle affect all types of objects. One same empirical ("*real*") object can thus be ideally possible or really possible or actually existing. In the same way, an ideal ("*ideal*") object can be either ideally possible or really possible or actually existing - even if, for such ideal objects, the distinction between possibility and actual existence (or validity) no longer holds the same importance. This means that *ideal possibilities*, which we shall examine first, affect the givenness of empirical objects (*Tatsachen*) as much as they affect the givenness of ideal objects such as essences (*Wesen*). Moreover, by adding the observation that ideal objects can be either essences or eidetic singularities, we then have at our disposal the entire conceptual apparatus necessary for our reflections on Husserl's phenomenological idealism.

In accordance with the general doctrine of the *Logical Investigations*, the *being-possible* examined by Husserl in the first place concerns *significations*. However, since the phenomenological foundation of the possibility of a signification depends on the possibility of an intuitive givenness of its object, Husserl's main interest lies in the possibility of *objects*. Since, moreover, the question for phenomenology is to examine the experience of an evidence which could serve as an epistemological justification for the assertion of a possibility, from the beginning on Husserl takes for granted the phenomenological equivalence between possibility and intuition.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> "Alle Seinsmodalitäten fallen (...) unter den Begriff des Seins (...). Sein im weitesten Sinn ist notwendig bezogen auf Bewusstsein. Jederlei Sein, Sein überhaupt, ist wesensmässig undenkbar ohne mögliches Bewusstsein, in dem es eventuell in verschiedenen möglichen Graden der Fülle gegebenes und speziell gesetztes bzw. erfasstes Sein ist." (256)

<sup>8</sup> "Jede Anschauung als solche ist eine originäre Quelle von Möglichkeiten hinsichtlich des in ihr Angeschauten, und sie ist es, wie wir sagten, 'als solche,' das heisst, sie ist diese Quelle unabhängig von dem intuitiven und qualitativen Modus." (177; also 184).

Let us be more precise and distinguish, along with Husserl, between the case of an *ideal* possibility (*ideale Möglichkeit*) versus that of a *real* possibility (*reale Möglichkeit*)! The *ideally* possible is anything which, in one manner or another, we can imagine without believing, for all that, that it could actually exist and belong to the realities of our familiar world. For Husserl, the typical example of such a (solely) ideally possible object is the centaur. Such an ideal possibility of an *empirical* object must be distinguished from those other *general* ideal possibilities which concern essences, whose intuition takes the form of an "ideation." In both of these cases of an ideal possibility, *phantasy* (*Phantasie*) plays a decisive role.

To recall, by phantasy, Husserl means an act of presentification (*Vergegenwärtigung*) of an object which is to be distinguished from a corresponding (sensible or categorial) perception both by the intuitive mode of givenness of its intentional object and by the neutralization of the positing (*Setzung*) of its actual existence. Hence, ideal possibilities are the dominion of the freedom of phantasy and this dominion is comprised not only of imaginary empirical objects such as centaurs but also includes the ideal objects of the logical and the eidetic sciences. These general ideal possibilities are then what concern "phenomenology qua eidetic science relating to 'consciousness in general'" (181).<sup>9</sup> By contrast, the establishment of a *real* possibility entails additional constraints and hence only comes at the price of a reduction or a limitation of the initial freedom of phantasy.<sup>10</sup> In other words, not everything one can imagine is *really* possible - even if it goes without saying that all that which is *really* possible is also, *eo ipso* and a *fortiori*, *ideally* possible. What more must there then be in order for an *ideal* possibility to become a *real*

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<sup>9</sup> To be more precise, one should add that this phenomenology studies the ideal possibility, belonging to the essence of consciousness, of relating either to ideally possible objects, to really possible objects, or to really existing objects. Even if, as we shall see, a phantasy act is insufficient for demonstrating the actual reality of an object, and even if phenomenology establishes the necessity of an actual act of perception to be related to the real object, this is still a matter of an *ideal and general* necessity. Such a necessity of an actual perception of actual reality is given to the phenomenologist under the form of an act of ideation or as a "*Wesensschau*," for which the phantasy of an actual experience of reality constitutes an entirely satisfactory point of departure. Put differently, the fact that phantasy constitutes "the vital component" of phenomenology does not at all exclude that such a phenomenology would be forced to show that an intuitive act, under the form of a phantasy, is incapable of verifying the existence of an empirical object. Properly speaking, it does not fall to the phenomenologist to verify the existence of some or other empirical object. For the most part, Husserl's phenomenology contents itself with showing which type of experience is required in view of such a verification.

<sup>10</sup> If the intuitive givenness of every possibility implies a phantasy act, and if one must distinguish between ideal and real possibilities, one has to conclude that there cannot be only one type of phantasy



possibility?

Husserl says that real possibility (*reale Möglichkeit*) is characterized by the fact "that it is not a simple possibility, but is a possibility 'for which something makes a case,' and which does so, now in a stronger manner, now in a weaker manner."<sup>11</sup> What then is it which, in the case of a real possibility, makes a case, and what does it make a case for? In making a case, the issue is clearly to show that the possible object could fit in with the realm of reality. But what is reality for phenomenology, if not the ensemble of objects whose existence has been established by the preceding course of our common experience? In other words, does not the phenomenological account of reality hold that the preceding course of our common experience justifies the trust we have in the existence of these objects? The really possible object is thus an object about which we can assume that, if it were actually given, it would be integrated harmoniously into the actual reality which is the field of our common experience. The really possible object is not yet an actual object, but it already something more than an ideally possible or *purely* imaginary object. This is because it is an object for which we have good reasons, not yet to *posit* (*Setzen*) its actual existence, but at least to *sup-pose* (*Vermuten*) its probable existence.<sup>12</sup> What can make a case for such a probable existence, if not the preceding course of our experience? An object is really possible when we posit its existence as being probable, and this on the basis of our preceding actual experience. The really possible object is hence an object whose possibility of existence is "*motivated*" by that which we have already perceived.

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at the source of these two sorts of possibility. One should thus distinguish, as Husserl frequently does in his texts dealing with phantasy and imagination, between a "pure" or "absolute" phantasy (meaning it is disconnected from any relationship of motivation with one's actual experience of the real world) and an impure phantasy (meaning one which is contaminated by its origin in the perceptual experience of reality). To be wholly precise, one would still have to add that the act which *posits* an object as *really* possible (which is to say, as actually able to exist) necessarily goes a step further than the neutrality of the impure phantasy act which nevertheless serves as its basis. The originary consciousness of a real possibility is thus something like a positional type of impure phantasy, or in other words, what Husserl calls an "assumption" or, again, a "supposition."

<sup>11</sup> "(...) dass sie nicht bloss Möglichkeit überhaupt, sondern eine Möglichkeit ist, 'für die etwas spricht' und bald mehr, bald weniger spricht." (178)

<sup>12</sup> "Jede Vermutung *entscheidet* sich für eine reale Möglichkeit (...)." (179)

In truth, the preceding actual experience is not only that which *justifies* our faith in the real possibility of a perceptual givenness of an object, but is also that which *gives* rise to that faith: the "supposition" (*Vermutung*) of the probable actual existence of an object is already the response to an invitation (*Anmutung*) which the previous experience proffers to us.<sup>13</sup> An object is therefore really possible not only to the extent that its givenness would be harmoniously integrated into the field of our actual experience, but also to the extent that its givenness would come to complete and enrich our previous experience. It is thus clear - even if Husserl does not insist on this point - that real possibility, inasmuch as it is motivated by the *past* experience, goes together with the anticipation of a *future* experience.

Hence, one need only cross a very small threshold in order for a real possibility to become an actual reality, and this threshold which leads a possibility to its realization is, for Husserl, the accomplishment of an act of *fulfillment*. However, before further examining the status of the actual reality which, in the case of transcendent empirical objects, remains a presumptive reality, it might be worthwhile to sharpen the Husserlian distinction between ideal possibilities and real possibilities.

For an object to be *ideally* possible, it merely suffices that one be able to imagine it. There is no need to assume that the object could belong to the real world such as we know it, and there is no need for the phantasy act, establishing its ideal possibility, to be motivated by the actual course of our preceding experience. Such an *ideally* possible object can subsequently turn out to be either *really* possible or *really* impossible. It is *really* possible when all of our preceding experience brings us to believe that it *can* (or even will) be actually perceived and that this would not fundamentally call into question the existence of the real world such as we know it. An ideally possible object can also be *really impossible* in cases where its actual givenness would be incompatible, either with the established nature of a particular real object, or with the existence of our real world. The possibility of a conflict (*Widerstreit*), be it local or global, with the actual course of our harmonious perceptive experiences is thus what signals a real impossibility, and such an evidence of conflict between the real and the possible allows us to come to a conclusion about a real impossibility.

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<sup>13</sup> "(...) dass das originäre Erfassen des Seins einer realen Möglichkeit als Unterlage (...) eine originär gebende Anmutung erfordert (...)" (185, also 179)

For an object to be *really* impossible, it does not merely suffice that nothing in one's previous experience would lead one to suppose its existence. Rather, what is necessary is that all of our previous actual experience be opposed to the possibility of its existence. Hence, it is not sufficient that an object appears without our having foreseen it or that it appears differently than how we had envisioned it. *It must not be able to exist.* In the most extreme case, which we termed a global conflict, the real impossibility amounts to a possible annihilation of the real world (*Weltvernichtung*) as we know it through our previous actual experience. To take an example: even if it is not really possible that President Bush would acquire a volume of the *Husserliana* for his personal library (nothing in our past experience of the person makes a case in favor of this possibility), it is not really impossible and is, beyond any doubt, ideally possible. This example also shows that there is, between real impossibility and real possibility, a vast gray zone which would deserve a more attentive examination. It also gives us to understand that an impossibility is something other and much more than the simple negation of a possibility.<sup>14</sup>

These reflections on the *being-possible* of an object already establish, in an unobtrusive fashion, the bases of *phenomenological idealism*. *For an object to be phenomenologically possible, it must be able to be intuitively given.* Without the possibility of an intuitive consciousness of the object, the assertion of its being-possible would be unfounded and thus *phenomenologically* impossible. We have seen that to different modes of possibility and different types of objects, there correspond different forms of intuitive consciousness. However, throughout all these differences, one finds confirmation of the same thesis of a strict *correlation* between the mode of being (*Seinsmodus*) of the object and the mode of accomplishment (*Vollzugsmodus*) of the acts of the intuitive intentional consciousness. It goes without saying that the assertion of such a correlation is a phenomenological thesis and not a metaphysical one. Husserl does not make any claims about a meaning of being - possible or real - which would precede or surpass our mode of knowledge. He only says that the only thing which can *justify* the assertion of a possibility is an intuitive datum of that possibility. Since the task of phenomenology is precisely to establish this type of justification, phenomenology can only admit of those possibilities of which it has shown, under

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<sup>14</sup> "Der Möglichkeit reiht sich die Unmöglichkeit als eine gleichberechtigte Idee an, die nicht bloss als Negation der Möglichkeit zu definieren, sondern durch ein eigenes phänomenologisches Datum zu realisieren ist." (173)

the form of an intuitive fulfillment, that they are *truly* possible. The phenomenological idealism which comes to a conclusion about the dependence of the mode of being-possible of the object vis-a-vis intuitive consciousness therefore goes no further than the assertion of a necessary *correlation* between intuitive consciousness and the being-true, which is to say *the being-known*, of the object. It is thus a question of an *epistemological* type of idealism which exclusively concerns the relationship between knowing and the known. Assuming that there could be a knowing consciousness without there being anything known by it would be as strange as assuming that consciousness could be intentionally related to a being which, in its reality in itself, would be totally unknowable.

## 2. The Existence of Real Objects

Let us begin our analysis of the *being-real* (*wirklich*) of an object with three clarifications! *Firstly*, for Husserl, the being-real of an object is not at all the particularization of its reality (*Wirklichkeit*) (cf. 197). This means one cannot grasp the reality of an object without that object being really given, and inversely, it means the assertion of its reality is nothing other than a conceptual explicitation of the intuitive givenness of the real object.<sup>15</sup> Reality, as an essential characteristic of an object, thus entirely depends on the intuitive and actual givenness of this object, and the givenness of the object qua real is not at all a particular case of the essence of reality. *Secondly*, among all really possible objects, it is the phenomenological validation of the *reality* or existence of *transcendent empirical objects* - what we usually call "things" (*Dinge*) - which poses the most arduous problems. The existence of *ideal* transcendent objects - such as the states of affairs referred to by the *a priori* sciences - does not pose any particular problems, for it is equivalent to their real possibility. With respect to *immanent* objects, one sole intuitive datum suffices to assure one of their existence. A single act of "internal perception" will do in their case. The same does not hold true for the objects of "external perception," and to them, therefore, we will have to devote the majority of our reflections. If no external perception, nor even a finite series of harmonious external perceptions, suffices to verify the actual existence of a thing, then what distinguishes the *actual reality* of the thing from its *real possibility*?

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<sup>15</sup> "Die Wirklichkeit ist nur durch aktuelle Erfahrung gewährleistet, und die Gewährleistung reicht in ihrer Gradualität genau so weit wie die Erfahrung selbst. Mit anderen Worten, die Wirklichkeit ist genau so weit gegeben wie das Wirkliche selbst." (198)

*Thirdly*, the question of the meaning of a *phenomenological idealism* is posed with the greatest poignancy precisely with regard to these very transcendent empirical objects. For the objects immanent to consciousness, no one would take exception to admitting that the intuitive consciousness which we actually have of them suffices to legitimate their being-real. Is the same true for the things which not only are not found in consciousness but also whose existence cannot be definitively verified by an actual intuitive consciousness, as protracted as it may well be?

The process of "realization," which makes an actual reality out of a real possibility, is equivalent for Husserl to a process of *intuitive fulfillment*. In Husserl's view, things work a bit like the way in which Leibniz explained how God created the real world by effecting a choice amongst all the possible worlds. Husserl writes: "At each step of our actual experience, there occurs a selection from among the infinity of series of possibilities which, up until that moment, had been equivalent."<sup>16</sup> The realization of a possibility thus amounts to a progress of knowledge, and this progress consists just as much in choosing the possibility to be realized, as in discarding or postponing, to a later time, the realization of other real possibilities. In effectuating this choice, consciousness consents, once more, to a restriction of its freedom. We recall that the passage from an *ideal* possibility to a *real* possibility already came at the price, for consciousness, of a surrender of a part of its sovereign power. In fact, out of everything which is *ideally* possible for it to imagine, only that which can be integrated into the actual and harmonious course of its perceptual experience is really possible for intentional consciousness. And out of everything which is *really* possible for it to anticipate, only that which is *actually* perceptually given to it merits the name "*real*" (*wirklich*).<sup>17</sup>

Hence, one should keep in mind that it is not a sovereign subject, but the actual course of harmonious experience which effects the choice between the possibilities to be realized. This is why Husserl speaks of a restriction of subjective freedom. One must keep in mind as well that a real possibility only becomes reality by being realized in an actual (*aktuell*), intuitive (*anschaulich*), and

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<sup>16</sup> "In jedem Schritt aktueller Erfahrung vollzieht sich dabei eine Auswahl aus der vordem gleichberechtigten Unendlichkeit von Möglichkeitsreihen (...)" (194)

<sup>17</sup> Or, in approaching this process of successive selections from the other end, one can say: "Nur aktuelle Erfahrung kann sozusagen aus den unendlich vielen und unendlich vieldeutigen blossen Möglichkeiten die eine, einzige Wirklichkeit 'des' Dinges, des 'an sich' völlig bestimmten, herauschneiden." (198)

positional (*setzend*) act of consciousness.<sup>18</sup> The phenomenologically founded claim of an object to actual reality (*Wirklichkeit*) thus depends on an intuitive and positional consciousness which is not merely possible, but which *actually exists*. We will have to make more precise the nature of this actual and factual (*faktisch*) consciousness and to gauge the weight of evidence it brings to bear in the argument in favor of phenomenological idealism. But first, we must attempt to understand better in function of which criterion the actual experience chooses to realize some or other particular real possibility to the exclusion of all the others. And we must still attempt to understand the status of reality which befits a transcendent empirical object, meaning an object which cannot be actually and intuitively given in an adequate manner. We shall see how these two questions come to converge with each other.

For Husserl, the criterion of selection in the realization of real possibilities cannot be anything other than a better knowledge of the real object. And this progress of knowledge of a thing is measured by holding it up to the ideal of an adequate knowledge of that very thing. It is thus a question of a normative type of relation, but in such a way that the norm is not imposed on the process of knowledge from the outside. The norm is, to the contrary, inherent to the actual and harmonious course of the experience, and this already at its origin. It is already there at the beginning because nothing other than the anticipation of the thing "in itself," as adequately given, directs - in the form of a teleological principle - the course of the experience. However, it still remains to be seen more precisely how the idea of such an adequate givenness of the thing - despite the fact that it is not only unrealizable but also contrary to the essence of the thing, according to which a thing can only be given under the form of adumbrations (*Abschattungen*) - can, nevertheless, govern the actual course of the experience of the thing. In other words, *how can the unrealizable direct the realization of a real possibility?* Or again: how is one to be assured of the reality of a thing if, on the one hand, this reality can only be guaranteed by the course of an actual experience and if, on the other hand, there is no question of the totality of the thing ever being actually given in the course of such an experience?

We know how, in the *Ideas I*, Husserl finds a way out of this labyrinth of

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<sup>18</sup> "Nur ein Fortgang aktueller Wahrnehmung oder Zuzug sonstiger aktueller Erfahrung (z.B. intuitiver Erinnerungen) schafft neues originäres Recht, bereichert die schon durch die Ausgangserfahrung eröffnete Rechtsquelle." (193 f.)

questions. All of his exertions converge upon the notion of the "the Idea in the Kantian sense." Therefore, there is nothing surprising about the fact that the texts of the revision of the *Sixth Logical Investigation*, written just a few months after the publication of the *Ideas I*, still borrow much from the solution proposed in the *Ideas I*. Nevertheless, one must not forget that these questions were posed with a particular urgency in the framework of that revision, given the failure arrived at by the analyses which the *Logical Investigations* had devoted to the status of the ideal of adequation at work in the perception of the transcendent thing.<sup>19</sup> We shall also see that in clarifying the difference between "the Idea in the Kantian sense" and "the essence" of the spatial thing, the text of the *Revision* substantially refines the doctrine of the *Ideas I*.

In the text of the revised fourth chapter of the *Sixth Logical Investigation*, Husserl writes:

One must conclude that the actual reality of the thing is an 'Idea' in the Kantian sense, and that this Idea is the correlate of 'the idea' of a 'certain' course of perception - a course which is never totally determined in advance, but which is, to the contrary, able to take infinitely varied directions and to be infinitely enriched.<sup>20</sup>

The *real* thing or "thing in itself" is thus the thing such as it would be given in an *actual and adequate intuition*. Since no finite series of partial, perceptual, actual, and harmonious experiences can definitively assure us of the reality of the thing, Husserl, the good mathematician, takes recourse to the infinite. The positing of the reality of a thing can thus be held to be justified only at the end of an *infinite* course of actual, perceptual, and harmonious experiences. Even if, with each new experience, the positing of existence is confirmed according to the extent to which the evidence of the actual reality of the thing increases, it is not impossible that there would occur an actual and perceptual experience which would be discordant and which would thus once more place in question, not only such and such determination of the thing, but even its very existence as well.

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<sup>19</sup> For a more precise comparison of the treatment of the "thing in itself" in the *Sixth Logical Investigation* and in the *Ideas I*, see also R. Bernet, *La vie du sujet*, PUF, Paris, 1994 - and in particular the chapter entitled "Finitude et téléologie de la perception" (121-138).

<sup>20</sup> "Danach ist die Wirklichkeit des Dinges eine 'Idee' in Kant'schem Sinn, Korrelat der 'Idee' eines 'gewissen,' aber im voraus nie vollbestimmten, vielmehr unendlich vieldeutigen Wahrnehmungsverlaufs, eines ins Unendliche erweiterungsfähigen (...)." (197)

This possibility - not in the least being motivated by the previous course of actual, perceptual, and harmonious experiences - can only be an *ideal* possibility. However, even if nothing inclines us toward it, one can still think or imagine that the harmonious course of experience would come to butt up against an insurmountable conflict which would place the actual reality of the thing in question. If, contrary to every expectation, this purely *ideal* possibility were to come to be realized, it would, at the same time, efface both the previous *reality* and the *real possibilities* accruing to it.

It would therefore be a new and unexpected actual reality which would be substituted for an older and familiar reality. That is to say, the idea of a conflict which would lead to an annihilation of *all* actual reality, meaning an *annihilation of the world* (*Weltvernichtung*), is a problematic hypothesis. Without being an ideal impossibility, it nonetheless is never a real possibility in the sense defined by Husserl: nothing, in the course of our preceding actual experience of the world, invites us to expect such a possibility of a total annihilation of the world. The least one can say is that one is not forced to make an argument for phenomenological idealism out of this improbable hypothesis (as Husserl still seemed to have done in § 49 of the *Ideas I*). If the stakes of this idealism are to show how the actual reality of the world depends, *phenomenologically*, on the actual reality of consciousness, which is to say, the *actual* course of pure experience, then the annihilation of the world equally amounts to an annihilation of every consciousness which would be related to this world.<sup>21</sup>

But let us return to the question of the status of the actual reality of a *singular* thing! We have already said that the *possibility* of a definitive phenomenological validation of the actual reality of the thing goes together with the *impossibility* of realizing the adequate intuitive givenness which such a validation of the reality of the thing would require. Husserl's whole argument consists in showing that this impossibility is accompanied, all the same, by a particular sort of possibility. It is in fact possible to have adequate evidence regarding the fact that an apodictic verification of the existence of the thing requires an infinite course of actual, perceptual, and harmonious experience

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<sup>21</sup> This is why, in the reflections the revision of the *Sixth Logical Investigation* devotes to phenomenological idealism, one can read: "Denken wir alle Dinge durchgestrichen, so haben wir auch aus der Wirklichkeit alle die Bewusstseine durchgestrichen, in denen die dingausweisenden Erfahrungsverläufe vorkommen bzw. einer Regel nach angelegt sind." (270)



concerning it. But does this not come down to confusing the evidence of the existence of a *singular* thing with that other sort of evidence, namely the one concerning the essence of *all* transcendent empirical objects, according to which the verification of the existence of such objects would require an infinite series of actual, perceptual, and harmonious experiences?

To escape from this confusion, one must therefore distinguish between, on the one hand, the anticipation of an adequate givenness of the thing such as it is effected in the experience of a particular thing and, on the other hand, the fact of knowing that the essence of every thing demands an infinite series of experiences for the thing's existence to be experienced. In the first case, it is a question of the actual reality of a particular thing which is presented under the form of an Idea in the *Kantian* sense; in the second case, it is a question of an intuition concerning the phenomenological essence of the actual reality of all things. Even if, in both cases, one appeals to the idea of an infinite course of experience, one must not confuse the Idea in the Kantian sense with the idea in the sense of the essence of an empirical reality ("*empirische Realität als allgemeines Wesen*" - 261).<sup>22</sup>

What is at stake in this subtle distinction? *First of all*, the assertion of the fact that the Idea in the Kantian sense - in contrast to the essence of empirical reality - can never become the object of an adequate intuition. Put otherwise, I know in an apodictic and adequate manner that the reality of each and every thing is given in a series of experiences which is, by a *priori* necessity, infinite. In the same manner, I know that since we do not possess such an infinite experience, the reality of a thing can never be either adequately given or established in an apodictic manner, and hence that it forevermore remains a presumption. Thus, it is this adequate knowing that I have of the phenomenological essence of the givenness of a thing which tells me that the Idea in the Kantian sense can never be realized.

*Secondly*, the distinction between the Idea in the Kantian sense and the essence of the empirical thing makes us pay attention to the fact that the particular thing itself, meaning, in Husserl's terms, "the thing in itself (*Ding an sich*)," rather than the essence of the thing, is what plays the role of the norm or teleological ideal anticipated in the course of the actual experience of a particular

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<sup>22</sup> "Die einzelne empirische Wahrheit ist wie empirisches (reales) Sein eine Idee im Kant'schen Sinn, aber nicht eine Idee im Sinne einer spezifischen Einheit." (265)

thing. The Idea in the Kantian sense is the idea of the thing in itself, meaning the idea of the complete givenness of the thing, nearer to which each new actual, intuitive, and harmonious experience draws me, without my ever reaching it completely. Far from being an idea in the sense of an *essence*, the Idea in the Kantian sense is thus the idea of a particular *reality*. And it is this idea which guides the infinite progress of my experience of the thing. One could also say that the Idea in the Kantian sense is the ideal of an adequate givenness of a particular reality and that this unreachable ideal - which does not have the status of a real possibility - nonetheless guides all the actual experiences of the thing and all the real possibilities which are related to it.

### 3. A New Conception of Phenomenological Idealism

Despite all appearances, this conception of the reality of a particular thing as an Idea in the Kantian sense does not in the least imply a rallying cry, on Husserl's part, for a retreat to the positions defended by the *Neo-Kantian* philosophers of his time. The reality of the "thing in itself," while spurning any sort of apodictic verification which would have the form of an adequate actual perception of the thing, is not a fiction, which is to say a simple *ideal* possibility.<sup>23</sup> The "thing in itself," inasmuch it is the Idea in the Kantian sense - even though it is unrealizable - remains a *real* possibility, namely the possibility of a harmonious ever-continuing prolongation of the actual perceptual experience of the thing. In each actual perception, despite its partial character, the thing itself is given "in flesh and bone" (*leibhaft*). Each new actual and fitting perception provides us with additional evidence concerning the actual reality of the thing. It brings us closer to the total givenness of the thing in itself. Therefore, one must not confuse the ideal of a total givenness of the thing in itself, such as it functions within partial givenness, with a fiction. Nor must one confuse the presumptive character of the *reality* of the thing in itself, meaning the fact that this *reality* can never be established in an apodictic manner, with a simple ideal possibility. In contrast to an *ideal possibility*, the (necessarily incomplete) verification of the reality of the thing cannot be realized by means of a simple act of thought or phantasy; it demands an actual perception of the thing itself.

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<sup>23</sup> This is what Husserl very explicitly points out in writing: "Blosse ideale Möglichkeit der Erkenntnis von einem transzendenten Dingreale ist nie und nimmer gleichwertig mit dem wirklichen Sein (...)" (267)

Let us therefore recall that the phenomenological meaning of being of the *being-real* of a thing, for Husserl, amounts to an intuitive fulfillment of the positing of the actual reality of the thing through an actual perception.<sup>24</sup> Stated differently, the actual existence of a thing depends - for its phenomenological validation - on a consciousness that is not only possible, but that is "actual" both in the sense of "*wirklich*" and "*aktuell*." Only an "empirical" or "factual" consciousness can justify the positing of the existence of an empirical fact.<sup>25</sup> Does this mean that the properly phenomenological conception of a "pure" consciousness, meaning a consciousness purified by means of a phenomenological reduction, is once and for all incapable of accounting for the existence of an empirical thing? That would be disastrous, for it would relegate phenomenology to the fictions of the Neo-Kantians. For a phenomenological validation of the being-real of an empirical thing to be possible, it has to bear out the existence of an intuitive consciousness whose "purity" would be compatible with its "facticity." This is precisely what Husserl sets about doing in writing that an empirical reality or "transcendent truth" is such that:

... belonging to its *esse*, there is the real possibility of a *percipi* and thus equally the real possibility of empirical egological subjects (...). This is not conceivable without an actual consciousness with its actual pure ego (...). The pure, meaning phenomenologically reduced, consciousness is the support of the real world, insofar as it is an actual, and not a merely possible, consciousness.<sup>26</sup>

This quote immediately takes us to the very heart of the new conception of *phenomenological idealism*, such as it is elaborated by Husserl in his new version of the fifth chapter of the *Sixth Logical Investigation*, entitled "*Evidenz und Wahrheit*." In our preceding citations, we have already made use of this new sketch of the fifth chapter which follows on the fourth, which had treated "*Möglichkeit und Möglichkeitsbewusstsein*."

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<sup>24</sup> "(...) nur wirkliches Bewusstsein in Form wirklicher Erfahrung kann reales Dasein rechtfertigen (...)." (270)

<sup>25</sup> Empirical truths require "eine empirische Beziehung (...) auf Bewusstseinszusammenhänge, die nicht Ideen, sondern Fakta sind." (265)

<sup>26</sup> "(...) zu ihrem *esse* gehört die reale Möglichkeit eines *percipi* und damit die reale Möglichkeit von empirischen Ichsubjekten (...). Dies ist aber undenkbar ohne wirkliches Bewusstsein mit seinem wirklichen reinen Ich (...). Das phänomenologisch reduzierte reine Bewusstsein nicht als mögliches, sondern wirkliches, ist Träger der realen Welt (...)." (264)

From the point of view of phenomenological legitimization, there is no empirical being-real of objects or the world without an intuitive, pure, and "empirical" consciousness which is intentionally related to this actual reality (or to which this reality is intuitively given). We know that a "*pure*" consciousness is a denaturalized consciousness, and this essentially means: purified of any empirical apperception. If the consciousness which serves as the phenomenological foundation of empirical reality has to be both "pure" and "empirical," it must therefore be "*empirical*" in a sense which would not run counter to its purity. Husserl sets out on precisely this tack in claiming that consciousness of an empirical reality can be taken to be "empirical" (but not "*real*") in exactly the same way as reality itself can, namely in that it has to be a "fact" (*Faktum*, *Tatsache*) and not as a simple ideal possibility. In order to be assured of the actual existence of a thing, it is necessary that one actually (in the double sense of "*wirklich*" and "*aktuell*") perceives it.

But what, more precisely, distinguishes such an actual perception from a solely possible perception, if not its accomplishment "*hic et nunc*"? On the last page of his new fifth chapter, Husserl in fact writes:

The being of the actual transcendent reality is an Idea in the Kantian sense (...). It is inconceivable that a thing would exist without it being determined by its relation to the *hic et nunc* (the centers of orientation) of the one who actually (*jeweilig*) determines it.<sup>27</sup>

In other words, the pure consciousness which assures us of the actual reality of an empirical thing has to be situated at the center of an orientation which is by nature at once both spatial and temporal. To be in a position to verify the actual ("*wirklich*" and "*aktuell*") reality of thing, the act of perception thus has to be accomplished here and now. "Here"? How could this pure perceptual consciousness have a "here," if it did not have a flesh (*Leib*)? If the "*hic et nunc*" of pure consciousness is required for a phenomenological verification of the actual existence of empirical reality, one must acknowledge that this pure consciousness, on which the actual reality of things and the world depends, is an

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<sup>27</sup> "Das transzendente wirkliche Sein ist eine Idee im Kant'schen Sinn (...). Es gibt kein erdenkliches Ding, das bestimmbar wäre ohne Beziehung auf das *hic et nunc* (die Orientierungszentren) des jeweilig Bestimmenden (...)." (271)

embodied consciousness. *In claiming that the existence of empirical reality depends on a consciousness which is both pure and factual, phenomenological idealism is thus compelled to admit that this pure consciousness has a flesh.*

It is true that in the text of the revision of the *Sixth Logical Investigation*, this consequence is not yet formulated *expressis verbis*. However, it necessarily follows from **Husserl's** insistence on the "hic et nunc" of phenomenological consciousness. Husserl recognizes this in the most explicit manner in another text dating from 1921, which he titled "Argument for Transcendental Idealism."<sup>28</sup> In a highly significant manner, that text insists not only on the *embodied* character of the perceptual consciousness of empirical reality, but equally insists on its *intersubjective* character: "I can only represent another egological subject to myself to the extent that I possess a transcendent flesh and to the extent that I represent the other to myself as a psychophysical ego."<sup>29</sup> Husserl's reasoning seems to be something like the following: there is no empathy (*Einfühlung*) without my being able to perceive the flesh of the other as an *analogon* of my own flesh. The phenomenological evidence of the existence of the other can therefore only be given to an embodied consciousness, an ego which has a flesh. If, in addition, the phenomenological constitution of the objective reality of nature cannot be realized by one sole and unique embodied consciousness, it is not only necessary that I have, thanks to my flesh, an experience of the existence of another embodied subject. Rather, along with that, it is also necessary that we together, inasmuch as we form an embodied community, establish the actual reality of nature. It follows that phenomenological idealism - far from leading to a sort of solipsism - not only implies intersubjectivity, but an intersubjective community of embodied subjects.

But let us return to the text of the revision of the *Sixth Logical Investigation*, on which we have relied throughout the whole course of our reflections! In this text, practically contemporaneous with the *Ideas I*, Husserl does not only say that actual, pure, and perceptual consciousness, on which the phenomenological legitimization of all actual empirical reality depends, has to be

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<sup>28</sup> E. Husserl, *Transzendentaler Idealismus* (op. cit.), Text no. 9.

<sup>29</sup> "Ich kann ein anderes Ich-Subjekt nur vorstellen, wenn ich einen transzendenten Leib habe und den anderen als leiblich-seelisches Ich vorstelle (...)." (*Transzendentaler Idealismus*, 171) And again: "Zwei Subjekte (...) sind nur kompossibel, möglicherweise zugleich seiend, wenn sie beide psychophysische Subjekte sind, bezogen auf dieselbe Natur." (*Transzendentaler Idealismus*, 170)

embodied, but he also claims, without the least bit of ambiguity, that this phenomenological constitution of empirical reality is something only an *intersubjective* community can achieve: "The objectivity of a transcendent truth necessarily depends on an intersubjectivity, ... belonging to its *esse*, there is the real possibility of a *percipi* and thus equally the real possibility of several empirical egological subjects (...)." <sup>30</sup> In virtue of what we have said in the preceding, this intersubjective community "of empirical egological subjects" requires that these subjects have a flesh. If the phenomenological meaning and validity of the existence of transcendent reality depends on the existence of an embodied consciousness and if the objective meaning which characterizes this transcendent reality necessitates the existence of an intersubjective community, then this community must be composed of embodied subjects communicating with each other through their body. Transcendental idealism, insofar as it sets about phenomenologically legitimizing our natural belief in the existence of a transcendent world, can therefore only come to a conclusion about the dependence of this world vis-a-vis the actual existence of an intersubjective community of embodied subjects.

#### 4. Conclusion

What is therefore the meaning of this new version of a phenomenological idealism proposed by the revision of the *Sixth Logical Investigation* and in which ways does this new version go beyond the one given in the *Ideas I*? In line with Husserl, it is useful to make a distinction between idealism in its broad and in its strict senses. Taken in a *broad* sense, phenomenological idealism boils down to saying that every *possibility* has to be phenomenologically established by an intuitive consciousness or, in what amounts to the same for Husserl, by an intuitive givenness of this possibility. We have seen that the intuitive consciousness of a possibility is, most often, an act of phantasy and that in any case it is never a perception. We perceive actual realities and not possibilities. Idealism in a broad sense, as entailed by the phenomenological analysis of solely possible objects, goes no further than the thesis of a necessary intentional correlation between the possibility of objects and the possibility of an intuitive

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<sup>30</sup> "Eine transzendente Wahrheit hat ihre Objektivität notwendig in der Intersubjektivität (...), zu ihrem *esse* gehört die reale Möglichkeit eines *percipi* und damit die reale Möglichkeit von empirischen Ichsubjekten (...)" (263 f.)

consciousness of such objects.

Idealism in a *strict* sense concerns *empirical realities* and claims that the meaning of their being-real and the validity of our belief in their actual existence depend, for phenomenology, on an actual perception. Better still, the being-real of empirical realities and the validity of our belief in them depend on an infinite series of actual and harmonious perceptions of those realities. This means the phenomenological legitimization of the meaning of the being of reality is a matter of a perceptual and actual consciousness which is, as we have already seen, phenomenologically pure, embodied, and intersubjective. Thus, in its assertion of the dependence of objects vis-a-vis consciousness, idealism in a strict sense goes much further than idealism in a broad sense. It makes claims about the reality of transcendent objects or "things in themselves," and it makes their actual existence depend on the actual existence of embodied subjects. In truth, saying that there are no thinkable things without a consciousness which thinks them (idealism in a broad sense) is not the same as saying that no transcendent empirical things can exist without there also existing embodied subjects which have an actual ("*wirklich*" and "*aktuell*") experience of them (idealism in the strict sense).

Regarding this idealism in a strict sense, in what ways could one be tempted to reproach it? Principally, for restricting the field of an empirical reality, the existence of which is phenomenologically justified, to the objects of an actual and present perception. But Husserl quickly refutes such a criticism, which comes down to confusing his phenomenological idealism with one or other form of phenomenalism: "On the other hand, an actual experience of a thing is not indispensable. For there exist things - or in any case, there could exist things - (...) which do not become the object of an actual experience."<sup>31</sup> Not everything which, for the phenomenologist, merits the name "real" has to be actually and presently perceived - even though it remains true that, in the case where nothing would actually be perceived, nothing real would subsist. One can thus say that only a 'hard core' of actual reality need be actually and presently perceived and that it is possible to infer the existence of a much vaster reality - in the form of a *real* possibility - on the basis of that core. This hard core of reality is of a variable geometry, according to the course and richness of the actual experience and according to the contribution of the different embodied subjects which take

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<sup>31</sup> "Andererseits wirkliche Erfahrung von dem Ding ist nicht nötig. Denn es gibt doch bzw. es kann geben (...) Dinge, die nicht aktuell erfahren sind." (268, cf. also 264 and 266)

part in its constitution. However, even when reduced to a minimal datum, this core of actually perceived transcendent reality remains a reality whose existence retains, for the phenomenologist, a merely presumptive validity.

Reduced to its simplest expression, Husserl's program consists in investigating which type of consciousness corresponds to which mode of being of an object. Hence, it takes it for granted that all modes of being are characteristics of the object and that they are the intentional correlates of a stance taken by a subjective consciousness. However, the phenomenology of the revision of the *Sixth Logical Investigation* does not merely boil down to evincing a *correlation* between an ideal possibility and a phantasy act, or again, between empirical reality and perception. By claiming that the meaning of the being of the object depends on its intuitive givenness, which is a datum of the sole intentional consciousness, it promotes consciousness to the role of supreme judge of all issues concerning being. Even if, in the texts we have looked at, Husserl never lets himself go so far as to proclaim an independence of consciousness vis-a-vis its intentional objects, he undoubtedly set about bringing to light a dependence of the nature of objects and of their modes of being vis-a-vis the acts of intuitive consciousness. Phenomenological idealism is, for the most part, nothing other than the assertion of such a dependence. It is thus a logical and inevitable consequence of the program of a phenomenological theory of knowledge such as we have expounded upon it. One cannot depart from this idealism without departing from Husserl's phenomenology - be it because one would leave behind phenomenology altogether or because one would contest the phenomenological well-foundedness of the presuppositions of the Husserlian theory of knowledge. This also means every extrapolation of the meaning of Husserlian idealism beyond the limits of his phenomenology of knowledge is exposed to the worst sorts of misunderstandings.

(Translated from the French by Basil Vassilicos)



